Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 /056 W
----------280605Z 107298 /21
P R 280435Z MAY 77
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4833
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2910

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT BG
SUBJECT: ZIA WINDS UP CAMPAIGN

1. IN THE FASHION OF A TRUE CAMPAIGNER, PRESIDENT ZIA WOUND UP HIS PRE-REFERENDUM POLITICKING WITH A RADIO AND TELEVISION BROADCAST ON THE EVENING OF MAY 27. THE SPEECH CONTAINED NOTHING MORE THAN AN EXHERTATION TO THE PEOPLE TO EXERCISE THEIR "RIGHT" OF VOTE AND DO SO IN HIS FAVOR IN THE MAY 30 POLL. HE DID NOT REPEAT THE 19-POINTS, BUT SAID THAT THEY WOULD BRING A "HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS" NATION IF THEY WE RE
APPROVED. HE NOTED PROGRESS WHICH HAS BEEN MADE AND PROMISED MORE.

2. ZIA DID NOT RPT NOT MENTION THE PROGRAM ANNOUNCED EARLIER OF FURTHER ELECTIONS FOR MUNICIPAL, DISTRICT AND FINALLY IN DECEMBER 1978 PARLIAMENTARY BODIES.
THOSE DO NOT FORM PART OF THE 19-POINTS BUT WERE STATED SEPARATELY WHEN THE CALLED FOR THE REFERENDUM. DURING HIS CAMPAIGNING THIS ASPEC T
HAS BEEN MUTED.

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3. THE PRESS MAY 28 CONTINUES THE LISTING OF GROUPS AND ORGANIZATION S
WHICH HAVE PLEDGED THEIR SUPPORT TO ZIA BUT THOUGH PRIVATELY DIS-TRIBUTED HANDOUTS, THERE HAVE APPEARED TWO FLIES IN THE OINTMENT. THE RADICAL JATIYE SAMAJTANTRIK DAL (JSD) HAS CIRCULATED A BROAD-SIDE CHARGING ZIA WITH DICTATORIAL DESIGNS AND USURPING TO HIM-SELF THE POWER THAT RIGHTLY BELONGS TO THE PEOPLE. IN MILDER TERMS,

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THE JATIYE JANATA PARTY, LED BY RETIRED GENERAL OSMANI, HAS CALLED FO
R
IMMEDIATE RESTERATION OF PARLIAMENTARY DEMOCRACY AND HAS CONDEMNED
THE DELAY OF NATIONAL ELECTIONS UNTIL DECEMBER 1978. THE JSD
STRONGLY AND THE OSMANI GROUP TEMPERATELY HAVE NOTED THE PRESENCE
OF MANY BANGLADESHIS IN JAIL FOR POLITICAL REASONS AND HAVE SAID
THAT THIS CONTRADICTS ZIA'S CLAIM THAT THE SEVEREIGNTY OF THE
PEOPLE WILL BE RESTORED.

4. AS REPORTED EARLER MOST OTHER POLITICAL PARTIES ARE SUPPORTING ZI
A
WITH THE NOTABLE EXCEPTIONS OF THE AWAMI LEAGUE AND THE DEMOCRATIC
LEAGUE OF MUSHTAQUE. EACH OF THESE APPEARS TO BE TAKING A NEUTRAL
POSITION, AT LEAST IN SO FAR AS PUBLIC STATEMENTS
ARE CONCERNED.

5. IT WOULD SEEM STILL THAT ZIA'S PROBLEM ON MAY 30 WILL NOT BE TO
GAIN A MAJORITY OF THE VOTES CAST, BUT TO DRAW A SIGNIFICANT NUMBER
OF VOTERS TO THE POLLS. WE HAVE MORE DIFFICULTY IN JUDGING THE
ENTHUSIASM OF THE RURAL AREAS AND BELIEVE THE LARGE CROWDS DRAWN
BY ZIA IN HIS PERSONAL APPEARANCES ARE NOT A MEASURE OF PROBABLE
VOTING ON MAY 30, BUT BASED ON DACCA THE INTEREST LEVEL IS LOW INDEED
.
ZIA, FOR REASONS UNCLEAR, HAS NOT GIVEN A PUBLIC SPEECH IN DACCA
ITSELF.
MASTERS

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